

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, in light of the preceding amendments and following remarks, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-13 and 16-28 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1, 6-9, 12-13, 18 and 20-22 are amended and claims 14 and 15 have been cancelled. No new matter is added. Claims 1, 18, and 21 are the independent claims. Example support for the amendments herein may be found at Para. [0058] of Applicants' application.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants note with appreciation that the Examiner has deemed claim 15 as containing allowable subject matter.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claim 15 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. In particular, the Examiner states that "[t]he term 'larger' alone does not have meaning unless another descriptor word is added to give it meaning." Applicants have cancelled claim 15 and incorporated the subject matter of claim 15 into independent claims 1, 18 and 21, along with adding the descriptor "in size" after "larger." Applicants, therefore, respectfully request that the rejection to the above claim under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph be withdrawn.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Watanabe/Conrads

Claims 1-4, 6-8, 10, 13, 14, 17, 18, 21-23, and 25-28 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over US Patent No. 7,102,677 ("Watanabe") in view of US Patent No. 5,184,018 ("Conrads"). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection for the reasons detailed below.

In order to expedite prosecution, Applicants have amended claim 1 to include the allowable subject matter of claim 15 along with the intervening subject matter of claim 14. Further, due to the subject matter of claim 14 being incorporated into claim 1, Applicants submit that the intervening subject matter of claims 6 and 13 is not necessary for the allowance of amended claim 1. Therefore, amended claim 1 is patentable over Watanabe and Conrads. Even assuming *arguendo* that Watanabe and Conrads are combinable (which Applicants do not admit), Conrads still fails to remedy the deficiencies of Watanabe with respect to amended claim 1. Amended independent claims 18 and 21 are at least somewhat similar to amended claim 1 and therefore patentable for at least somewhat similar reasons. Dependent claims 2-4, 6-8, 10, 13, 17, 22-23 and 25-28 are at least patentable by virtue of their dependency on one of amended independent claims 1 and 21. Dependent claim 14 is cancelled. Applicants, therefore, respectfully request that the rejection to the above claims under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) be withdrawn.

Watanabe/Conrads/Yang

Claim 5 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Watanabe in view of Conrads in further view of US Patent No. 6,180,969 ("Yang"). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection for the reasons detailed below.

Even assuming *arguendo* that Watanabe, Conrads and Yang are combinable (which Applicants do not admit), Yang still fails to remedy the deficiencies of Watanabe and Conrads with respect to amended claim 1. Dependent claim 5 is at least patentable by virtue of its dependency on amended independent claim 1. Applicants, therefore, respectfully request that the rejection to the above claims under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) be withdrawn.

Watanabe/Conrads/Prater

Claims 9, 11, 16, 19, and 24 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Watanabe in view of Conrads in further view of US Patent No. 5,654,537 ("Prater"). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection for the reasons detailed below.

Even assuming *arguendo* that Watanabe, Conrads and Prater are combinable (which Applicants do not admit), Prater still fails to remedy the deficiencies of Watanabe and Conrads with respect to amended claims 1, 18 and 21. Dependent claims 9, 11, 16, 19, and 24 are at least patentable by virtue of their dependency on one of amended independent claims 1, 18 and 21. Applicants, therefore, respectfully request that the rejection to the above claims under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) be withdrawn.

Watanabe/Prater/Yang

Claims 12 and 20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Watanabe in view of Conrads in further view of Prater in further

view of Yang. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection for the reasons detailed below.

Even assuming *arguendo* that Watanabe, Conrads, Prater and Yang are combinable (which Applicants do not admit), Prater and Yang still fail to remedy the deficiencies of Watanabe and Conrads with respect to amended claims 1 and 18. Dependent claims 12 and 20 are at least patentable by virtue of their dependency on one of amended independent claims 1 and 18. Applicants, therefore, respectfully request that the rejection to the above claims under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

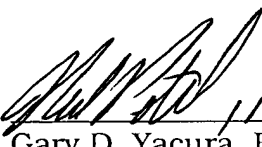
In view of the above remarks and amendments, the Applicants respectfully submit that each of the pending objections and rejections has been addressed and overcome, placing the present application in condition for allowance. A notice to that effect is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned.

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Gary D. Yacura, at the telephone number of the undersigned below.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 08-0750 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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